

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 08518 150250 Z

13

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 (ADP) W

----- 064639

R 150100 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1668

S E C R E T SAIGON 8518

EXDIS

FOL TEL SENT SAIGON FROM CAN THO MAY 14 RPTD FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE

S E C R E T CAN THO 0311

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB, VS

SUBJECT: 32 ND FANK BATTALION REINFORCED BEGINS ITS DEPARTURE

REFERENCE: SAIGON 8286, 8290, 8292, CAN THO 0307

EXDIS

1. MGEN NGHI, MR IV COMMANDER, REPORTED MAY 14 THAT FANK HELICOPTERS ARRIVED MAY 13 IN CHAU DOC TO BEGIN THE HELIO LIFT OF THE 32 ND FANK BATTALION REINFORCED. HE ALSO RECEIVED A JGS INSTRUCTION MAY 14 TO MOVE THE REMAINDER OF THE BRIGADE BY ROAD TO RACH GIA FROM WHENCE THE UNIT, THEIR WEAPONS, AND DEPENDENTS WILL BE TRANSPORTED TO KOMPONG SOM.

2. NGHI STATED HE DISAGREED WITH THE JGS AND HAD APPEALED THE ORDER DIRECTLY TO LT GEN LE NGUYEN KHANG. HE TOLD KHANG THAT IF THE 32 ND BATTALION STAYED HE WOULD SUPPLY IT AND KEEP IT IN THE FIGHT. WITHOUT THE BATTALION THERE WOULD BE NO ONE TO PROTECT THE SOME 15,000 CAMBODIAN REFUGEES WHO MUST LIVE IN THE KIRIVONG AREA. WITHOUT FANK SECURITY THE REFUGEES MAY MOVE BACK UNDER KI CONTROL.

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3. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION BGEN HUYEN VAN LAC, CHIEF OF STAFF, MR IV, REPORTED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE HELICOPTERS WHICH ARRIVED YESTERDAY, MORE HAD COME TODAY. THE 32 ND FANK BATTALION

REINFORCED NOW NUMBERS ABOUT 930 MEN. IN ADDITION, THEY HAVE OVER 1200 DEPENDENTS. THE INCREASE IN BATTALION STRENGTH IS DUE TO STRAGGLERS WHO HAVE WANDERED IN OVER THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS (CAN THO 0307). LAC SAID HE HAD ALSO CALLED THE J-3 AT JGS TO APPEAL THE JGS INSTRUCTION.

4. THE VICE CONSUL IN CHAU DOC CALLED MID- AFTERNOON MAY 14 TO REPORT THAT SEVEN HELICOPTERS LIFTED FANK TROOPS FROM TINH BIEN DISTRICT IN CHAU DOC ON MAY 13 TO TAKEO. SIX MORE LIFTS TOOK PLACE MAY 14. THE MOVEMENT IS PRESENTLY STALLED BECAUSE OF POOR FLYING CGNDITIONS.

5. COMMENT: NGMI IS LESS CONCERNED WITH CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS THAN HE IS WITH THE LOSS OF FANK TROOPS. ONCE THE 32 ND BATTALION REINFORCED DEPARTS, THE FIRST NVA DIVISION, PARTICULARLY THE E-44 REGIMENT, WILL HAVE COMPLETED ITS ASSIGN-

MENT TO CLEAR ALL FANK POSITIONS BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE BORDER AND TAKEO. THE NVA NO LONGER HAVE TO SUPPORT KI UNITS AND WILL BE ABLE TO TURN THEIR FULL ATTENTION ON THE CHAU DOC SEVEN MOUNTAIN AREA. AS LONG AS THE 32 ND BATTALION WAS PRESENT THE NVA HAD TO HOLD KI HANDS.

WISNER

QNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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